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A Woman's Life and the World's Work

By
Mrs. HELEN BARRETT MONTGOMERY

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A WOMAN'S LIFE AND THE WORLD'S WORK

By Helen Barrett Montgomery

The girl of today is not seeking for an easy place. She knows that she has but one life to invest, and is eager to invest it where what she has to give will earn the largest returns for the betterment of the world.

Missionary service is one of the big opportunities open to those who honestly desire to do hard things that will count in places that are apt to be overlooked. The experiences of the great war have thrown into the foreground the claims which Christianity's unending struggle for the conquest of the world makes upon the students of all countries. In the light of recent experiences of heroism and sacrifice for a great cause missionary service gains a fresh appeal.

There is, first, the appeal of danger and difficulty. The woman contemplating foreign mission service must face oftentimes isolation in unlovely surroundings, the lack of many of the decencies and comforts of life, the presence of unchecked contagion and disease, the deadening influence of low ideals of life,

the barriers of alien speech and custom; all these, and in addition, not infrequently, actual danger and suffering. These very disabilities constitute one strong appeal of the task. There are more volunteers seeking to go to Africa or to Tibet than to the more attractive stations in Tokio or Bombay. The heart of youth is not afraid of difficulty. The Crusader of Christ does not shun danger.

There is, second, the appeal of great need and suffering. Two-thirds of the women of the world are in the prison of dense ignorance, unable themselves to read the simplest book, and without any means of contact with the printed page. Two-thirds of the women of the world are without girlhood, social intercourse, equipment for their task of home-building, or legal status as free persons. Two-thirds of the women of the world are without the medical aid of doctor, nurse or hospital. Two-thirds of the women of the world face its sorrows without the spiritual leadership of Christ. The needless sacrifice of millions of lives, the appalling moral evils, the pathetic helplessness and the unsatisfied yearnings of these millions of women constitute a call to the Christian women of the world that cannot be silenced.

There is, third, the appeal of a world in convulsion. All that can be shaken is tottering. A new world must be founded and built up out of the wreck and confusion of the present. In this rebuilding the Cross must be central, fundamental. Whoever has

the Gospel in trust has a summons to share its treasures such as no previous generation has ever heard. Here and now is the Church's supreme opportunity to plant deep in the heart of the world the life-giving Gospel of Christ.

The opportunities for service are many and diverse. While there is not yet and may not soon be on the foreign field very much room for narrowed specialization, there is a growing opportunity for the woman definitely prepared to do a definite piece of work. The differing lines of work have one thing in common: they all demand the woman with the ability to lead and direct and inspire others. The woman going into overseas service in this army of peaceful penetration goes always into an officers' training camp. Unless she possesses a genuine capacity for leadership, it were better to remain in the home land where there are many opportunities for honorable service under direction in lines already established. The foreign missionary, whether in the isolated out-station, or in the great urban centers, should always be seeking and securing the opportunity to work through the women of the country to which she is sent and to develop them into leadership. The woman, for example, who is capable of conducting only one well organized kindergarten is not so much needed as the one who can train scores of kindergartners to do the work among their own people. The evangelist who can go about scattering

the good seed of the Kingdom from her own hands is not so much needed as the one who, like her Master, can teach and inspire and send out into the white harvest field bands of sowers and reapers.

Among the diversified forms of service it will be possible to mention only a few broadly typical.

First, there is the work of the teacher. Probably more women are needed as teachers than is the case in regard to any other form of foreign mission service. The teacher is needed in all grades of schools, from kindergarten to college. Her educational equipment, training, and experience should be of sufficient breadth and depth to equip her for the direction of a school of many grades. She may herself do comparatively little teaching, but she must be able to supervise and inspire the native teachers, win their respect for her educational qualifications, and infuse into the class room the active spirit of Christianity. Although she may begin by opening a primary school, it is not at all improbable that within ten years she may find herself responsible for a school comprising all grades up to and including the high school. She must be adequate as an educator to direct such expanding work. The kindergartner, to be sure, has a more closely limited sphere of responsibility. But it is essential that she have a grasp of both kindergarten and primary school technique and be able to relate the one to the other.

Certain specialized departments of education are

calling loudly for teachers. For example, Oriental women are eager for western music and western musical instruments. A well organized and spirited music department is a necessity in the high schools and boarding schools of many fields. The music teacher is able to attract to our Christian schools many who would otherwise be beyond the reach of missionary influence. Piano and organ lessons, chorus and part singing, and in some cases, school orchestras are among the features of the music courses of many schools. In addition to the cultural value of the study of music, the teacher of music has opportunities for direct personal work on spiritual lines. This gives a rich missionary content to her service.

Drawing, both freehand and mechanical, has a recognized place in school systems of various Oriental countries, and there is a limited call for teachers of these subjects.

Domestic science and arts are gaining increasing recognition in Oriental school systems. Well equipped teachers of these subjects are demanded, who are able to adapt western methods to the differing needs of the Orient. One of their greatest opportunities will be in the training of the young women of the East to meet the necessity for better and more scientific home-building.

The teacher of athletics and physical culture, too, will find a place. Group games, out-of-door games

involving team work, are part of the big social service which missionary schools are rendering in the Orient. Education through play is a new and strange idea, so foreign to native ideals and customs that a good deal of promotion is necessary in order to make the community take play seriously. However, baseball, tennis, and basket ball are already acclimated in China, India and Japan, through the efforts of American missionaries. Better bodies, better health, better morals are already evident among the student body in these countries.

Industrial and trade schools are now recognized as legitimate channels of missionary activity. Since for the most part the industries of the Orient are agricultural, there is a demand for the teacher trained in agriculture—animal husbandry, dairying, horticulture, poultry raising, etc. The need that primary education in village and rural communities be correlated with the daily life of the people is very great. Beginnings have been made. The demand for this sort of rural school of elementary grade is already acute. An interesting illustration of the possibilities already realized was seen during a great *mela* or fair recently held in Allahabad, India, where the ladies of the Rajah's harem took courses of cooking lessons in a properly secluded place. These lessons were given by enthusiastic missionary women. The mission had exhibits of poultry and was visited by thousands. Sleek cattle were

shown. Their phenomenal records in milk production called forth the wondering admiration of many farmers. There were model silos, demonstrations regarding the selection of seeds, exhibits of fruits and vegetables, and other practical and helpful features which brought the work of the school of agriculture very close to the entire community. Through the help given by this experimental school, Christian villages in many localities have been enabled to lift themselves into a new standard of community life.

There is, second, the service rendered by the physician and nurse. The need for medical women is probably more acute than any other on the foreign field, although the number of physicians and nurses which can be used is not so great as the number of teachers. Most women of the Orient must be ministered to by women, if ministered to at all. To relieve their intolerable physical sufferings and to prevent the injury done to the coming generation through ignorant and superstitious practices, it is imperatively necessary that there be a greatly augmented force of physicians and nurses. These are needed not only to manage the hospitals for women and children and to train native nurses, but also and chiefly, to educate and equip native women as physicians.

The women of America and Europe can never meet the medical needs of the Orient. There are

in China two hundred million women and children, among whom only ninety-three women physicians are at work. For the one hundred and fifty millions of women and children in India, there are one hundred and fifty-nine woman physicians. The one hundred million in Moslem lands have only twenty women doctors, and the fifty million in Africa fifteen, of whom five only are Americans. So great is the dearth of properly trained American women in the Orient that nearly a score of hospitals are closed for lack of physicians. In many cases these small hospitals are the only ones within a radius of several hundred miles. Plenty of missionaries are at work in stations where they must travel a week or more to reach the nearest physician or hospital.

What they cannot do by themselves the medical women of America and Europe can do through training the women of the Orient. Thanks to the efforts of the schools during the last two generations, there already exists in India and China a limited number of women who are prepared to undertake thorough medical education. This number is swiftly rising, and its efficiency is increasing. Medical schools for women are already established in India and China,—few in number and inferior in equipment at present, but great with promise for the future. The Women's Missionary Boards of the world are rallying for the support of these medical schools, and within the next few years there will be not less than four equipped

to offer first-rate medical training. A few women of the most modern thorough-going preparation and high grade standing are needed to staff medical schools in China and India and Moslem lands. Many more physicians are needed to open the closed hospitals and adequately to staff them. The number of nurses who are needed is naturally in excess of the number of physicians. The opportunities for the nurse in social and community work are unexcelled by those open to any other missionary. Both physicians and nurses can find full scope for their professional abilities and a wonderful field in which to incarnate the Gospel of the Good Physician.

There is, third, the varied service of the evangelistic worker. Evangelism has been receiving fresh emphasis during the last few years. Christianity must not become segregated in great educational institutions. It must go out in aggressive warfare against the strongholds of evil. In a sense, all missionaries are evangelists. No woman without a positive gospel has any business on the foreign field. In their desperate needs, these great nations are not asking us for critical theories or doubts; they are asking if we have Good News to communicate. But in addition to this all-pervasive atmosphere of evangelism, there is an important field specifically known as "evangelistic." Under this term is included the work of the woman of special gifts in public speech who is able to speak persuasively to groups

of women in private homes or to larger audiences in church or school house. There is the woman who has special training in the teaching and interpreting of the Bible, and in training others to present it. There is also the woman who is not afraid of pioneer work, who delights to go out into the country, among the people who have never heard of Christianity. The particular abilities of such a woman lead her not so much to train and develop Christian character among the rising Christian communities, but rather to go out into untouched fields to interpret the Gospel to the people for the first time.

A woman who looks forward to some form of evangelism for her life work is rarely able to enter upon it during her first term of service in the foreign field. She is not equipped for such work. Her ignorance of the language, customs, and point of view of the people bar her from access. She usually acquires the necessary knowledge of people and language in some school position, where she begins her work with her pupils.

As the number of educated women on the field increases, the type of evangelist who is most useful is the one who knows how to inspire and direct others in carefully planned evangelistic effort. There are today women on the field who are engineering efforts designed to use the abilities of scores of native women evangelists. There are also great Bible training schools to which pastors' helpers, Bible women

and Sunday School teachers come in large numbers for brief periods of training. Following the training they return to their villages to pass on to others the hymns and Bible portions and practical instructions in daily living which they have received.

One of the undeveloped sectors in the evangelistic field is the Sunday School. The need for better and more thorough Sunday School work among the children is already recognized as acute in every Oriental country. The helps for the Sunday School, the children's papers, the stories, the lesson outlines, are still unsatisfactory. One of the big pieces of work of the immediate future is to bring the Sunday School work of most foreign fields abreast with the standards already obtained in our own country.

Fourth, there is a whole new world of opportunity to serve that new woman of the Orient, the woman in industry.

The growing industrialism of the Orient is creating new problems which missionaries must meet. This calls for the woman who has specialized among factory operatives and child workers. Christian countries are much further advanced in recognizing the evils of burning up the woman and child-power of the nation through unregulated industrial operation. Non-Christian countries are for the most part yet unawakened in regard to the peril. Missionary leadership of the very highest type will be required in the campaign to create, arouse and line up public

opinion in the non-Christian lands to combat the industrial evils which the Orient is bound to inherit alongside the undoubted benefits of modern industrial organization. Already women are the greatest sufferers from excessive hours of labor, low wages, unhygienic surroundings and bad moral conditions in the factories of Japan, China and India. The foreign department of the Young Women's Christian Association and the Women's Boards of Foreign Missions are now giving serious consideration to the problems of the factory girl.

Fifth, there are needed women with a gift and skill in writing. The demand for clean Christian literature is becoming acute. Many of the rising Christian communities are not yet able to write and publish their own books. Missionaries must be set apart to translate, adapt, edit periodical literature, and supervise the work of native committees. In all China there is just one child's picture book, one children's magazine. In many vernaculars, the Bible, hymn book and a few text books are the only books. The woman who looks forward to literary work must serve a long apprenticeship until she shall have mastered the language and penetrated into the daily life of the people.

The need for volunteers in several lines of work has been sketched: the teacher who must lay the foundations of Christian society by educating the women and girls, who are in most non-Christian

lands illiterate; the physician and nurse who must not only alleviate the suffering but make the beginnings of medical education among the women of the Orient; the evangelist and Sunday School leader; the social worker in industrial centers. Many other requirements can only be mentioned. A few dentists are already at work; others will be called for. Laboratory workers in hospitals, stenographers, secretaries, business agents, are in occasional demand. There are needed house mothers in girls' dormitories, matrons and superintendents of buildings, though the number of such positions is necessarily limited. The growing philanthropic work is bound to make demands for trained women. There are hospitals and colonies for lepers, insane asylums, schools for the blind and the deaf under mission auspices. The woman who is looking forward to work abroad may find that her training has fitted her for some such outpost of Christian service.

Last, there is the detained, the truly detained, volunteer. Few think of a missionary career as being open to her; but in reality she is one of the important factors in the work of establishing the Kingdom of God on earth. Sometimes a young woman consecrates herself to overseas service and later finds that the providential ordering of her life makes it impossible for her to carry out her purpose. The Lord who has accepted her self-dedication and enrolled her as His soldier, assigns her to duty in the

home land. Let her not rebel. In the great world war, the victorious peace would have been impossible without the help of those who served behind the lines. In some sense the very crisis of the foreign mission enterprise is here in America. There are forms of service in promotion of foreign missions which are open to every detained volunteer. These forms are varied enough to provide full scope for many forms of ability.

There are, for example, careers open for those who can interest and teach little children. The missionary work among the children of our churches is largely undone. Here and there a struggling children's band appears, runs its brief course and passes away. But if ever we are to have missionary churches, we must have missionary training for the children, and the leaders for this work must be found among our college girls. The missionary story teller will never fail of an enraptured audience. It is her privilege to summon the missionary heroes of the future into the field through the lasting impressions which she creates in the hearts of children. Positions of great importance in the ranks of the volunteer workers of our women's organizations in the various Protestant denominations remain long unfilled. There are presbyterial secretaries and synodical secretaries and secretaries in conferences, in associations and dioceses. All of these unpaid positions need to be filled by volunteer workers of

enthusiasm, ability and consecration. Any detained Volunteer is likely to find one of them within her reach, loudly calling to her for aid.

Missionary literature goes undistributed because there is no one to make this distribution her life work. Missionary facts go unwritten, or are written in a lifeless and inefficient way for lack of some one clever and capable and well educated enough to write them out with compelling power.

Other opportunities there are too numerous to catalogue here. The girl with dramatic ability may direct and present missionary playlets. The one who can draw may make charts and posters. The girl with executive ability may galvanize into activity some somnolent local auxiliary. Then there are the paid secretarial positions in state and national organizations. These demand women of very high grade and afford to those who enter them opportunities to shape the missionary policy of great foreign mission boards.

Let us not forget the girl with the check book. If she cannot go as a foreign missionary she need not lack for a missionary career. She may send out her substitute and support her. Possibly she may herself go out for a year or two at her own charges to help relieve some overworked missionary of her labors in account keeping and report making.

Whether here in her own country or in the very

ends of the earth, it is only required that a volunteer be found a true soldier, one who recognizes that she is under orders, with a commission to fulfil and a Captain to obey.